

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-10 and 12-32 are pending herein.

By this Amendment, claims 1, 3-7, and 9-16 have been amended to more fully distinguish the invention of the claims over the teachings of the prior art reference cited against these claims. Claims 2 and 11 have been canceled and claims 18-32 have been added.

No new matter is added by this Amendment. Support for the amendments to claims 1, 3-7, and 9-16 is found in the original specification and the original claims. In particular, support for the language added to claims 1 and 9 may be found in original claim 2. Support for the amendment to claim 10 may be found in original claim 11. Support for the new claims 18-32 may be found in original claims 1, 4-10 and 13-17.

I. REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,480,202 (Deguchi).

Applicant submits this rejection is now moot in view of the amendments to claims 1, 9 and 10. Specifically Applicant notes that claims 2 and 11 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. To this end, claims 1 and 9 were amended to include the limitations of claim 2 and claim 10 was amended to include the limitations of claim 11.

In view of the foregoing amendments, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

II. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 2-8 and 11-17 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. To this end, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 9 to include the limitations of claim 2 and has amended

claim 10 such that claim 10 now includes the limitations of claim 11. Applicant has also added new independent claims 18, 23 and 24 incorporating original claims 6 and 15 with the limitations of their respective base claims.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 9 and 10, new independent claims 18, 23 and 24 and dependent claims 3-8 and 12-17, 19-22 and 25-32 are in condition for allowance.

III. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3-10 and 12-32 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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